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at table, employed in the two great empires of the New World. Among the Incas, these objects were made of the precious metals; among the Aztec princes, clay, painted with elegance, was often employed, and the articles which had been once brought to table could never be used again. Figs. 22, 23, and 24 represent dishes made in the empire of Peru, in the middle of which an Aztec dish is drawn. From their nature, being made of clay, and rather coarsely painted, these dishes could not have appeared at the splendid banquets which historians have described. Fig. 25 carries us back to some curious trifles, the products of Mexican art: it represents an infant asleep in a cradle.

NEW ZEALAND BIRDS.

That the frightful and disgusting habit of cannibalism should have been prevalent amongst so fine a race as the New Zealanders, has often formed the subject of wonder to the ethnologist. We think the circumstance may be attributable to the almost total absence in New Zealand of indigenous quadrupeds, and the scarcity of native vegetable productions. The only native quadruped whose existence is well attested, is a sort of rat; though Mr. Walter Mantell, the English Government Commissioner for the settlement of native claims, is inclined to believe in the existence of another, a sort of badger. At any rate, this animal, if not extinct, must be very rare, seeing that a large reward, offered by Mr. Mantell, failed to bring a specimen of this animal (termed by the natives Kaureke) to light.

But, if nature was sparing in her allotment of quadrupeds to New Zealand, she lavished on that far-distant isle a variety of extraordinary birds. Occasionally their bones turn up, startling the naturalist by their extraordinary size, or curious conformation. Most of these birds were, in one respect, like the ostrich; that is to say, their wings were only rudimentary—very useful as sails to catch the breezes, and assist the animal in running, but totally unavailable for the purpose of flying. Although the only evidence we possess of the former existence of all these birds, save one, is the discovery of their bones, yet circumstances favour the idea that they were not exterminated until comparatively recent periods. Popular native tradition still hands down their characteristics; the various native languages give them a name; which would scarcely have been the case if these animals had ceased for many centuries to exist.

The largest of these wingless birds is termed in native language the *Moa;* it must have been considerably larger than the ostrich; of this there can be no doubt, although the entire skeleton of the Moa has not yet been found.

Our drawing (p. 9) and present remarks do not relate to the Moa, but to an individual of a species, contemporary as is supposed with that gigantic bird, and for the discovery of which we are indebted to the son of that eminent English naturalist, unhappily now no more, the late Dr. Mantell. Mr. W. Mantell imbibed much of his father's love of natural history, and very soon after his appointment to an official capacity in New Zealand, applied himself to the collection of fossil bones of birds in which New Zealand is so rich. At length a fortunate chance enabled him to send to England the skin of a bird supposed to be extinct; and had it not been for the gluttony of a crew of sailors, the bird itself, alive and well, might probably have figured in the Zoological Society's gardens.

Before stating how this capture was made, it is necessary to premise that, according to native tradition, there lived, contemporary with the gigantic *Moa*, a bird also wingless, but far smaller, termed by the inhabitants of the northern island *Moho*, and by those of the southern island *Takahé*. All the natives who mentioned this bird concurred in stating, that formerly it existed in such numbers that their ancestors derived from the species their chief sustenance; the natives, moreover, were all unanimous in stating the bird to have been already for some time extinct. The species was not extinct four years ago, as we shall presently discover; but whether the species be *now* extinct—whether we are now about to describe the last of these birds—is more than can be averred.

To show how extremely rare the *Moho* must have been, it is sufficient to mention, that none of the natives with whom Mr. Mantell conversed on the subject had ever seen it; moreover, the Rev. Richard Taylor, who has so long resided in the islands, had never heard of a bird of this kind being seen. In his "leaf" from the Natural History of New Zealand, under the head of Moho, is the following note:—"*Rail*, colour black, said to be a wingless bird as large as a fowl, having a long bill, and red beak and legs; it is nearly exterminated by the cat; its cry was '*keo, keo.*'"

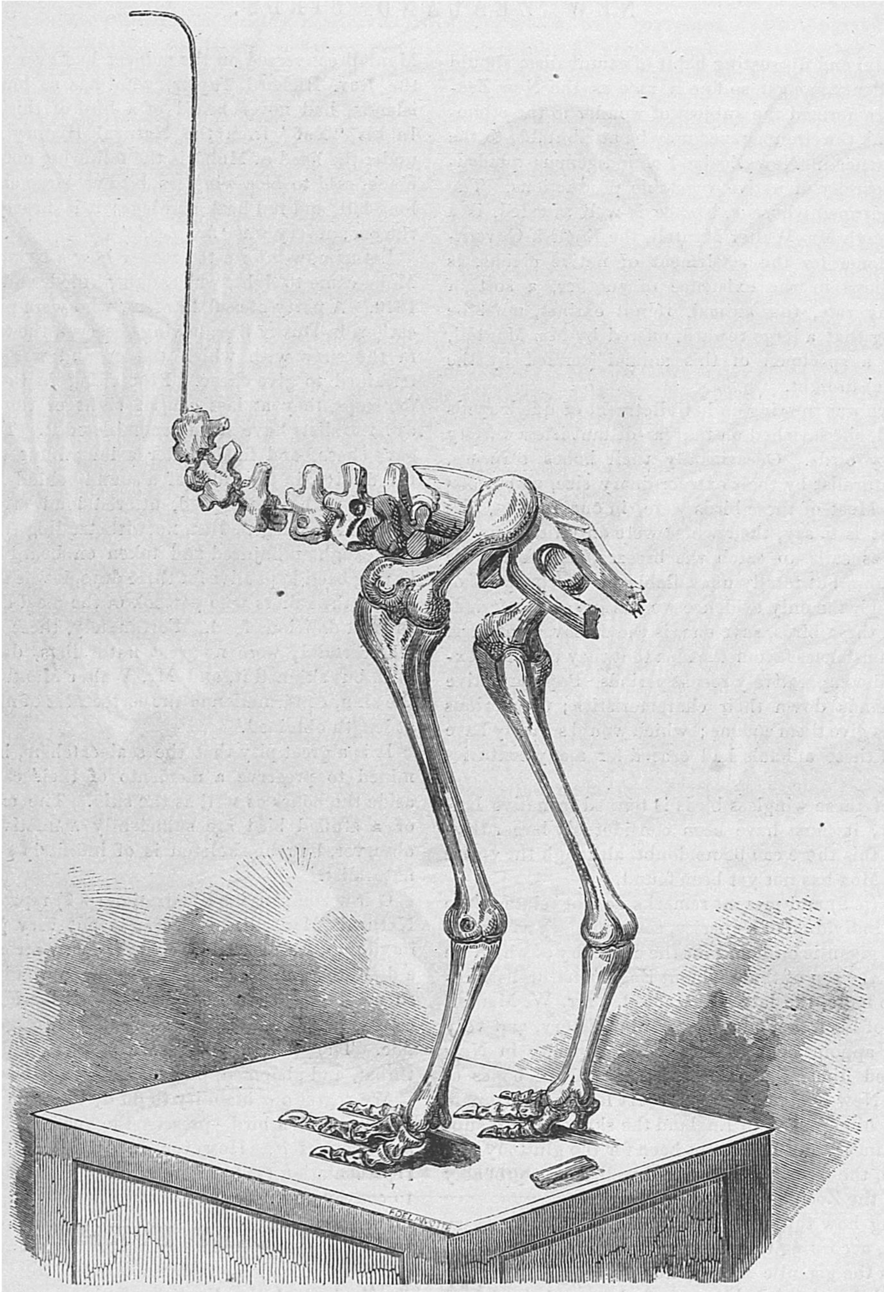
Let us now inform the reader how a living specimen of the Moho came to light, was caught, killed, and eaten in the year 1849. A party of seal hunters, who were pursuing their avocations in Dusky Bay, having observed the trail of a large bird in the snow with which the ground was then covered, determined to give chase. Proceeding in the direction of the footsteps, they at last caught sight of the *Moa* or *Noturnis*, as naturalists have since denominated it. Their dogs at once gave chase, and finally after a long hunt the bird was captured alive, in the gully of a sound behind Resolution Island. It ran with great speed, uttered loud cries, and violently attacked the dogs. But, notwithstanding the long struggle, it was caught uninjured and taken on board ship, where, after having been kept alive for three days, it was at length killed and eaten, the sailors who partook of the meal describing the bird as most delicious food. Fortunately, these nautical epicures, who certainly were no great naturalists, did not pluck their bird, but skinned it, and Mr. Walter Mantell having secured the skin, confirmation of the correctness of native accounts was at length obtained.

It is a great pity that the seal catchers, having once determined to preserve a memento of their capture, did not set aside the bones as well as the skin. The external lineaments of a stuffed bird are sufficiently attractive to the general observer, but the skeleton is of infinitely greater value to the naturalist.

Our accompanying illustration (p. 9) represents the *Moho*, or Noturnis Mantelli. Its form is not very prepossessing, and its plump, well-rounded contour is so strongly suggestive of a delicate *bonne bouche*, that we do not wonder that the race is so nearly extinct; if, indeed, its extinction be not already consummated. The colours of the plumage are exceedingly fine. The beak and legs are of a deep crimson, the head, throat, and abdomen, purple, and the tail white.

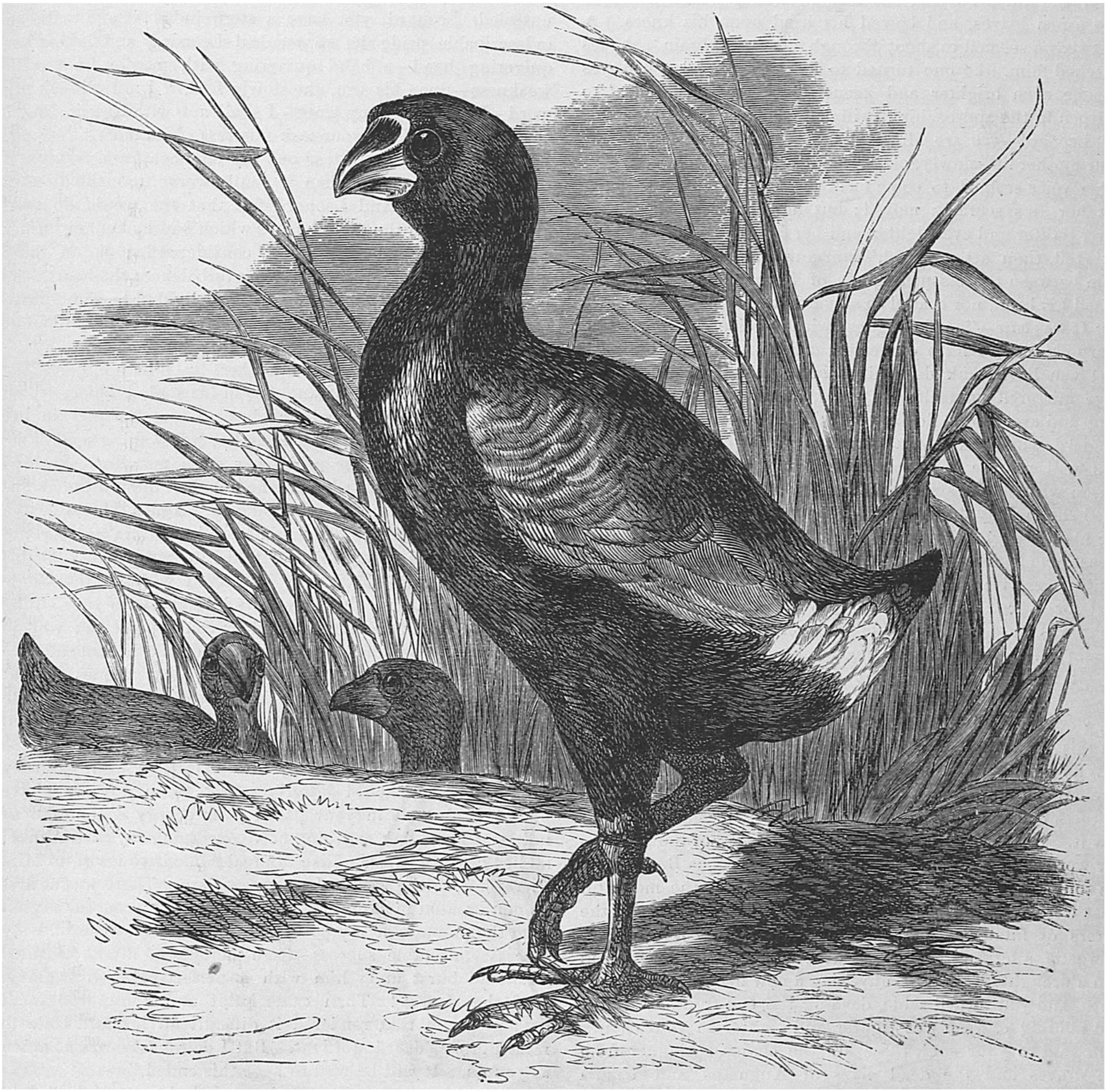
We regret our inability to do by the larger as we have done by the smaller bird—present the reader with a perfect representation of it. However, in default of this, we append a representation (p. 8) of so much of its skeleton as may serve to convey an impression of its general configuration and enormous size. Our sketch has been copied from an anatomical preparation now to be seen in the Museum of the College of Surgeons, London—that unequalled collection, for the first germ of which the English are indebted to their illustrious countryman, John Hunter. Connected with this skeleton, there is a very interesting tale, of which we will give an outline, as it serves very forcibly to demonstrate the wonderful degree of perfection to which the science of comparative anatomy has now arrived.

When digging deep into the bowels of the earth, separating strata, and bringing to light the fossilised traces of animals now extinct, the naturalist refers them to this or that genus; when he confidently asserts that such or such a bone belonged to an enormous lizard to which the modern crocodile is but a pigmy; when he proclaims that in such a region there formerly



SKELETON OF A NEW ZEALAND BIRD, IN THE MUSEUM OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS.—DRAWN BY PERMISSION OF THE COUNCIL.

existed dragon-like beings with wings, or scaly monsters with webbed feet, and necks like those of swans—or, in short, some of the marvellous creatures which we are told roamed this world of ours long long before the advent of man,—we are sometimes inclined, notwithstanding our confidence in the power of induction, to think philosophers a little too wild. But the tale we shall now relate concerning our bird-skeleton goes far to abolish our doubts on this head, and to vindicate the assertions of geologists. The tale is this:—Some years ago, a traveller, returning from New Zealand to England, brought with him a few inches of bone. Not a very inviting freight, one would think, nor likely to arrest a traveller's attention: but Australian gold had not been discovered at the period to which our remarks apply, and travellers were content to fill their sea-trunks with curiosities less fascinating than nuggets. The traveller in this case was an intelligent man. He had heard of gigantic New Zealand birds now extinct: he had heard of Professor Owen, to whom, accordingly, he presented his few inches of bone—that precious bone which now lies at the feet of the skeleton-bird, and which our artist has depicted. The Professor examined the bone attentively. It was big enough to have been the bone of an ox;—an observer less acute than the Professor would probably have regarded it as such, and have thrown it into his dust-bin. Not so Mr. Owen: he noticed a peculiar cancellated structure in the bone; an appearance only noticeable in the bone of a bird; but how could there have been a bird so large? It must have been almost twice the size of the largest existing ostrich. This startling consideration did not deter the philosopher. A bird's bone this remnant must be, he proclaimed, and, at once setting to work, he figured the bird as it must have been. The announcement, however, was too startling. Even people who had put faith in all that philosophers had written about iguanodons, ichthyosauri, and megatheriums, could not believe in the former existence of this New Zealand bird. Professor Owen waited his time. Causing inquiries to be made in New Zealand, his emissaries at length succeeded in collecting some disjointed bones. Forthwith they were packed off in a trunk directed to the man of bones in Lincoln's-inn-fields, London. Arrived at their destination, the bones were put together on wires, and formed the very skeleton which our artist has depicted. Some of the vertebræ of the neck are yet wanting, as the reader wil observe, but there stands the wire representative of the length to which they should extend. Let us hope, as gold-hunting has now commenced in New Zealand, that some nugget-hunter will turn up amongst his more ignoble treasure these missing bones, and thus enable the worthy anatomist to complete his bird.



NOTURNIS MANTELLI.

THE SCHOOL OF LIFE.—BY ANNA MARY HOWITT.

CHAPTER VI.

"Teach me thy love, thou meek philosopher!
Show me thy nightly visions, bright-eyed seer!
Give me thy faith!—why should I blindly err
And shrink with anxious fear?"
Mary Howitt.

But let us return to Leonard. The words of Mr. Pierrpoint had sunk with the sharpness of a dagger into Leonard's soul—the old wound re-opened—the fearful moment had arrived, when, cost him all brightness of the future, Agnes must know the truth. To have so long with cowardice concealed the truth rom her was baseness.

Silently Leonard and Agnes paced the terrace, and silently descended towards the little stream. Leonard's eyes never raised themselves from the earth; but in Agnes there was an extraordinary excitement, her large brown eyes flashed with a weird light—her slight form raised itself with an extraordinary vigour, her small white hands were grasped as